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NSC BRIEFING

1 March 1955

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VIETNAM

- I. Viet Minh expected soon to press complaints that US is wrecking Geneva agreement.

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- B. Chou En-lai has already lodged protest with ^{Molotov,} Eden, that Manila pact conference violated Geneva agreement on several counts and laying the blame on the US.

1. Probably prelude to Viet Minh action.

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II. Viet Minh, in fact, guilty of gross violations.

- A. Have obtained prohibited war materiel from China, including antiaircraft artillery and tanks.
- B. Prevented evacuation of refugees desiring to go south.
- C. Have instigated violence in Laos.
- D. May be difficult to make countercharges stick, however, in view of report from truce team stationed on border that there is no evidence illicit shipment of military equipment.
- E. Viet Minh can be expected to meet other charges with similar accusations of their own.

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III. Meanwhile, [redacted] Viet Minh retains extensive influence in South Vietnam.

- A. Vietnamese officer recently toured five of 19 provinces in South Vietnam.
- B. In this area, immediately south of Saigon, anti-Communist sentiment largely confined to merchants, intellectuals and government officials.
- C. In two provinces 60-70 percent of population are pro-Viet Minh; in other three 5-10 percent.

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- D. In all cases, most of remaining population are either subject to Viet Minh terrorism or are neutral.
- E. In addition to "goon squads," Viet Minh presence maintained by network of cells, clandestine meetings and extensive propaganda work conducted by individuals as well as teams.

1. System held together by couriers.

- F. Significant that these provinces not among those considered Viet Minh-controlled before cease-fire.

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situation can be further improved if Diem regime asserts itself militarily and carries through on reforms.

- H. True situation still problematical, but these reports clearly indicate magnitude of security problem which Diem regime only beginning to deal with.

IV. Other information has definitely established that the Viet Minh is actively engaged in subversive activity in South Vietnam, Laos and Cambodia.

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C. Also in late December Vietnamese government official reported that Viet Minh was organizing farmers into agricultural "cells" and directed to refuse to pay taxes, work for landlords or co-operate with government.

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